

**Dance Traditions - DANC 211/4 - Winter 2010**  
Contemporary Dance Department, Faculty of Fine Arts  
**Instructor: Philip Szporer**  
**Monday 2-5 p.m. - H-535**  
**Office Hours: by appointment (on Mondays, GM 500-42, 12:30-1:45)**  
[pszporer@sympatico.ca](mailto:pszporer@sympatico.ca)

The course is a survey of the history of dance, focusing on Modernism, Post-Modernism and beyond.

**Course text:** There is one text for this course, *Moving History/Dancing Cultures (A Dance History Reader)*, edited by Ann Dills & Ann Cooper Albright (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001) – available in the university bookstore. Periodically, a short article may supplement the course text, if relevant.

Please feel free to bring in exceptionally-good articles, books, video clips, sound bytes that you have found so that we can share your intellectual discoveries.

**Objectives:** The course will attempt to train students in basic research skills, the importance of historical context, the use and documentation of primary and secondary sources, the critical interpretation of texts, and the implications of methodological approaches. Students will write in a variety of genres, including the personal essay, précis, and research paper. They will work effectively in groups to solve problems and create a collaborative project, i.e., an oral presentation, in which students utilize technological skills, make connections across course readings and experiences, integrate multiple perspectives drawn from different disciplinary and cultural contexts, and engage in critical inquiry about information and ideas.

**Summary of Criteria of Evaluation:**

1. Quiz (1): 20% (on Feb 15)
2. Precis: 5%. (due Jan 18)
3. Response Essays (2): 20% (each essay is worth 10%) (due Jan 25 & Feb 1)
4. Group Presentation and Final Essay: 40% (20 points for each element) Submit proposal idea on Mar. 1. Final Essay due Mar 29.
5. Moodle Entries: 5%
6. Attendance/Participation: 10%

**GRADING - Assignments & Exams:**

**1 - quiz (1)** - 20% (20 pts) - A short answer/multiple choice in-class quiz based on class lectures, discussion, readings, media examples, and discussions.

**2 - précis (1) of required reading & writing of relevant questions - 5 %**  
(one assignment, five pts). Grading of the précis is based on clarity of expression,

understanding of material, and to elucidate the relevance, significance, and essential meaning of the articles/chapters. Typed, doubled-spaced (reasonable font size).

**3 – two (2) response papers** - 20% (two assignments, 10 pts each). Response essays are based on selected chapters from the assigned text. There are several types of response: You must pose at least one question about the reading. This can be either a point that you're confused about or one that you'd like cleared up; it can be an objection you see to an argument in the readings; a query about how something said in the reading relates to something else; a critique; or anything else. Typed, doubled-spaced (with a reasonable font size). No bibliography or footnotes required, unless warranted. Length: 500 words each.

**4 – group presentation & final essay** - 40% (20 pts – oral group presentation; 20 points – written essay, length: 7 pages). These are group projects. Groups will consist of 5 individuals.

**Focus for the Group Presentation & Essay:** Choose an individual or a group of individuals and put into context the impact of their work. Consider the social, cultural and the aesthetic shift realized through their efforts, or conversely how socio-political, economic and cultural forces impacted their work.

**Each group will submit research proposals (one short paragraph) for the group presentations & final essay (due Mar. 1)**

#### **Group Presentation Guidelines**

Group work is a very important part of many university courses, and the nature of the work world today increasingly requires individuals to have problem-solving and team-building skills.

What can we learn about your subjects by considering them together that we cannot learn by considering them as individuals?

In both of these assignments, every member of the group should participate. Please keep in mind two principles: You are here i) to learn, and ii) be respectful of other points of view.

For the presentation, think about how you are going to divide the time allocated for your group. (Hint: Don't spend ten minutes on your introduction!)

What information can you present that will convey the significance of your subjects' intellectual and creative contributions efficiently and effectively? Do you want to concentrate on a single work, moment, idea? Do you want to narrate a life story? Do you want to incorporate a story about the cultural community to which your subject belonged?

Consider the format of your presentation. Do you want to project illustrations? How can brief audio or video clips make important points?

In consultation with the instructor, you will prepare a fifteen-minute (15) presentation on an agreed topic. You may wish to speak either from notes or from a fully articulated text but either way you must bear the time limit in mind and be as succinct as possible in your handling of your material. More detail (e.g. quotations from set texts or from critics, dates, etc.) can be included in a handout or in the ensuing discussion.

Your final task as presenter is to generate discussion. Prepare yourself for likely questions. Given the brief nature of the presentation simply ask students to interrupt only if absolutely necessary, instead making a note of questions to ask at the end, thereby facilitating the discussion process.

#### **Checklist**

-The better the presentation and discussion, the better the learning outcome for everybody.

-Be imaginative where possible by using visual aids, projections, slides, handouts, even performance, again bearing in mind the constraints of time and ensuring that your material is directly relevant, illuminating, well-illustrated, and not merely decorative. The main points of your argument should be clearly expressed, and the structure of your presentation coherent and logical.

The mark awarded for the presentation will combine with that of the assessed essay (on the same topic) to form the final mark (the presentation is worth 20%, the essay 20%). The aim of the exercise is for students to research a topic and then communicate effectively the results of their work. Consequently it is important to consider both the quality of content and of presentation. I will consider both when arriving at a mark. **Groups must hand in a version of their presentation immediately after the event.** Students can either write their oral group presentation out in full or in note form.

Group oral presentations must be in English, but the final essays may be written in French or English. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, with a reasonable font size, paginated, and include your name, a title, as well as proper citations/references (MLA or Turabian, for example), bibliography, filmography, and videography. Grades are based on clarity of expression, observational, descriptive, and analytic skills, research methods, references, footnotes and bibliography. This is part of the communication exercise.

**5 - Blog/forum entries (through the Moodle site)** - 5% (5 pts) Regular participation in Moodle discussion forums/blogs is encouraged, as it will easily (and moderately) boost your grade. Engage in discussion with your classmates outside the classroom setting!

**6 - attendance and participation** - 10% \*\*Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of every class. Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions. If you miss one class, your attendance/participation mark will automatically decrease 5%, two absences 10%. Exception: if you have a justified absence or a bona fide emergency (for example, hospitalization) (see the Teacher and Student Handbook for department rules & definitions).

Concerning H1N1, I may have to alter course requirements, assignment deadlines, and grading procedures; and the university may have to alter the semester calendar. All students must account for their absenteeism. If you have a case of the flu, instead of supplying a medical note, students must provide a written detailed explanation of the nature of their illness, preferably by e-mail.

Repeated lateness may result in a lower overall grade. Attendance and participation grades are based on preparedness for class, willingness to engage in class discussions and listening attentively.

Please advise early in the term if you are taking religious holidays.

#### **Plagiarism**

The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism, which the Code defines as "**the presentation of the work of another person as one's own or without proper acknowledgement**" (Article 16<sup>a</sup>).

This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, Internet sites, professor's course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, for example, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone - it can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. "Presentation" is not limited to written work. It also includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. If you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. If you cite your own work without the correct citation, this too is plagiarism.

Plagiarized work will result in a failed grade.

In Simple Words:

DO NOT COPY, PARAPHRASE OR TRANSLATE ANYTHING FROM ANYWHERE WITHOUT SAYING FROM WHERE YOU GOT IT! DON'T FORGET TO USE QUOTATION MARKS!

Other information

+Assignments must be handed in hard copy, and not sent via e-mail. E-mailed assignments will only be accepted in cases of grave illness or circumstance.

+To receive the best grade, your writing must be error-free and well structured.

+Late work is not encouraged. If you have a valid reason for postponing assignment submissions, such as a death in the family or a serious illness, please contact me (or the Department Assistant), and we'll arrange a reasonable alternative. Otherwise, a grade will be deducted for each day the paper is late (i.e, 'B' to 'B-').

Weekly Schedule

Lecture 1 (Jan. 4)

**Birth of Modern Dance:** Isadora Duncan, François Delsarte, Loie Fuller, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn.

Lecture 2 (Jan. 11)

**\*\*Library Orientation** with dance librarian Jared Wiercinski. In class. (compulsory)

German Expressionism (Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss, Rudolf Laban), Ballets Russes, and Vaslav Nijinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

Lecture 3 (Jan. 18)

Martha Graham, Erick Hawkins, Doris Humphrey, José Limón

**>>Assignment # 1:** Write a précis of the compulsory reading (due Jan. 18) - 5 points

- Deborah Jowitt, "Form as the Image of Human Perfectibility and Natural Order", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 300-306.

Lecture 4 (Jan. 25)

Katherine Dunham, Pearl Primus, Alvin Ailey, Arthur Mitchell

**>>Assignment # 2:** Write a response essay to the compulsory reading (due Jan. 25) - 10 points

- Brenda Dixon Gottschild. "Stripping the Emperor: The Africanist Presence in American Concert Dance", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 332-341.

### Lecture 5 (Feb. 1)

Merce Cunningham, Alwin Nikolais, Jerome Robbins

#### Post-Modernism in the U.S.:

Perspectives and concerns of the Judson Church artists and the Contact Improvisation movement (Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, Steve Paxton, Simone Forti, Meredith Monk, etc...), and the emergence of related forms and connections in Canada (EDAM, Catpoto).

**>>Assignment # 3: Write a response essay to the compulsory reading (due Mar. 1) - 10 points**

- Sally Banes, "Choreographic Methods of the Judson Dance Theater", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 350-361.

### Lecture 6 (Feb. 8)

#### **Parallel Universe: Quebec Dancing into the 21st Century – Part 1**

Consideration of social, political and cultural shifts in Quebec, with emphasis on Groupe de la Place Royale, Nouvelle Aire, the major figures (Édouard Lock, Ginette Laurin, Paul-André Fortier, Marie Chouinard, Jean-Pierre-Perrault), and the rise of the independents.

**Guest lecture:** Montreal dancer and dance scholar Sylvain Lafortune, whose specialty is research on partnering in dance.

### Lecture 7 (Feb. 15)

#### **Parallel Universe: Quebec Dancing into the 21st Century – Part 2**

**\*\*QUIZ – in class (Feb 15) – 20 points**

**STUDY WEEK: Feb. 22 – no lecture**

### Lecture 8 (Mar. 1)

#### **I. Post-Modern Strategies Beyond North America**

The emergence of Tanztheatre in Germany (Susanne Linke, Reinhild Hoffman, Pina Bausch), plus William Forsythe, Mats Ek, Jiri Kylian, Ohad Naharin.

**Guests:** Dancers from Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal will speak about working with Jiri Kylian, Mats Ek, and Ohad Naharin

**>>Submit research proposals for the group presentations & final essay.**

**Lecture 9 (Mar. 8)**

**II. Post-Modern Strategies Beyond North America**

Butoh (Japan), and the traditional vs. contemporary dialectic in Asian dance.

>> Meetings with instructor re group presentation and essay proposals

**Lecture 10 (Mar. 15)**

**III. Post-Modern Strategies Beyond North America**

Belgium Streams: Wim Vandekeybus, Anne T. de Keersmaeker, Alain Platel, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui

Group presentations (4)

**Lecture 11 (Mar. 22)**

Group presentations – (8)

**Lecture 12 (Mar. 29) \*\*\*FINAL ESSAY DUE**

**From African Contemporary Dance forms to the Africanist presence in Contemporary American Performance:** Salia ni Seydou, Germaine Acogny, Willa Jo Zollar, Bill T. Jones, Rennie Harris, Savion Glover.

**Easter break (Apr. 5) – no class**

**Lecture 12 (Apr. 12) – No class for some students in dance tech rehearsals. For those not involved in that day's tech run, the class is compulsory.**

**Critical Perspectives**

Dance writing and ethics, incorporating a debate of the required reading.

Compulsory reading:

- "Discussing the Undiscussible", Arlene Croce, *The New Yorker*, 1995

**Campus Resources**

Student Learning Services: <http://learning.concordia.ca/>

Access Centre for Students with Disabilities:  
<http://supportservices.concordia.ca/disabilities/>